disbursement of committed aid/loans and to ensure that dependence on external financing is progressively reduced.

Electoral reforms to discourage non-serious candidates to contest as independents

362. SHRI P. N. SUKUL:
SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) how many candidates filed their nominations as independents for the Lok Sabha elections held recently;

(b) how many of them were elected as Members of Parliament and how many lost their deposits; and

(c) whether Government are considering to introduce reforms in the electoral laws with a view to discouraging non-serious candidates from contesting elections as independents?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) 3634 independent candidates filed their nominations for the Lok Sabha Elections, 1989.

(b) 13 independent candidates were elected. Number of candidates who forfeited deposits is being collected from the concerned Chief Electoral Officers.

(c) This is among the proposals presently under the consideration of Government.

Total votes polled by different parties in the General Elections

363. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI:
SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate percentage of the total votes polled in favour of different national parties in the General Elections to Lok Sabha held recently; and

(b) the corresponding figures in the General Elections held in 1984?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Franchise exercised by the youths in 18 to 21 years of age group in the General Elections

364. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many youths in the 18 to 21 years of age group got voting rights during the General Elections to Lok Sabha, held recently;

(b) if so, what is the approximate percentage of those who exercised their franchise in the General Elections; and

(c) whether any study relating to their reaction in getting voting rights have been conducted?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) The voting age having been reduced to 18 through an amendment to article 326 of the Constitution, all those who had attained the age of 18 as on 1st April, 1989, got such voting rights.

(b) The Election Commission has informed that 35.7 million persons in the age group of 18 to 21, had been added to the electorate for the recent Lok Sabha elections and youths in large numbers had also participated in the elections. However, no compiled statistics are available regarding the exact number of persons in this age group who had actually voted.

(c) Lowering of the voting age has been welcomed by everyone including the youths

themselves. It is not considered necessary to make any such study.

महाराष्ट्र में "नाबार्ड" द्वारा लघु अवधि के कृषि ऋणों का पुनर्वित्तपोषण किया जाना

365. श्री विश्वास रामराव पाटिल : क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि पिछले तीन वर्षों के दौरान "नाबार्ड" द्वारा महाराष्ट्र राज्य के सहकारी बैंकों को लघु-अवधि के कृषि ऋणों का पुनर्वित्तपोषण सही किया जा रहा है, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप राज्य के सहकारी बैंक रुग्ण हो रहे हैं और किसानों को कृषि ऋण भी उपलब्ध नहीं हो पा रहे हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) इस संबंध मे सरकार की प्रतिक्रिया क्या है ?

वित्त मंत्री (प्रो० मधु दंडवते) : (क) जी नही ।

(ख) और (ग) प्रश्न पैदा ही नही होते ।

Setting up of Currency Printing Press at Salboni, West Bengal

366. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present position of the proposal for the setting up of a Currency Printing Press at Salboni in West Bengal;

(b) by when the Press is likely to be set up; and

(c) what will be its production capacity?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) to (c) Government have approved the setting up of two new currency note printing presses; one at Salboni in West Bengal and the other at Mysore in Karnataka, involving an outlay of Rs. 844 crores. In course of exploration of various alternative sources of funding, Government found that the Reserve Bank of India was willing to set up the two Presses. In view of this, RBI has been entrusted with the execution of these projects. The production capacity of each of the two presses is about 5000 million pieces of notes per annum. Completion of the projects would take about 4 years.

Posts lying vacant in Rourkela Steel plant

367. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of posts are lying vacant in Rourkela Steel Plant;

(b) if so, the number of posts in different categories lying vacant as on 30th June, 1989; and

(c) what are the details of steps being taken to fill up these posts ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) to (c) While some vacancies keep occurring from time to time in different departments, manpower studies have revealed that there is surplus manpower in RSP on an overall basis. The need at RSP is to optimise the utilisation of existing manpower by retraining and redeployment. Recourse to recruitment is taken only for filling key positions which cannot be manned from within.

Opening of new branches of commercial banks in Orissa

368. SHRI JAGADISH JANI Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether Government have any proposal to open more branches of commercial banks during the remaining period of the Seventh Five Year Plan;